

[TS-HK-MB'S 66]

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Prime Minister Chou En-lai
Ch'iao Kuan-hua
Vice Foreign Minister
Chang Wen-Chin, Assistant Foreign
Minister (second part only)
Tang Wen-sheng, Interpreter
Chi Chao-chu, Interpreter
Two notetakers

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger,
Assistant to the President for National
Security Affairs
Winston Lord, NSC Staff
John D. Negroponte, NSC Staff

[Omitted here is conversation unrelated to South Asia]

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[Dr. Kissinger speaking]:

1 At that time it seemed to us that the Soviet Union was pursuing two policies that were sometimes contradictory at the same time, which we have found is not an unusual phenomenon in Moscow. On the one hand, they wanted to make progress in their bilateral relations with us. On the other hand, they wanted to show, to demonstrate your impotence, and your impotence even combined with us, and therefore they pursued the policy in the Indian Subcontinent. And secondly, they greatly accelerated their arms into Indochina as a result of the first Podgorny visit. This is our analysis-- your interpretation may be different. Actually, what happens in Indochina would not demonstrate your impotence, but would create one other Soviet

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dependent state around your borders. We discussed that previously-- I am just summing it up.

And we also believe that they would have liked the offensive to start before the visit to Peking because that would have created the maximum amount of complications in our relationship. I am just giving you our assessment. I am sure you do not agree with every last analysis we have made.

As you know, we reacted extremely strongly to the situation in South Asia. And on one morning when we received a message that you had a message to deliver to us which was, we thought, that you had sent your troops in, we had decided that if you were attacked by the Soviet Union as a result of it, we would support you and take military measures if necessary to prevent that attack. We received that message in early December--I think it was December 11, our time, in the morning. We received word, and when we picked up that message in the afternoon, it had a different content. We also, as you remember, threatened to....

Prime Minister Chou: By that time East Pakistan was already unable to be saved.

Dr. Kissinger: No, no, you made the correct decision. It would have been too late, but I had had a talk with your Ambassador.

Prime Minister Chou: Because when they were in the UN at that time they were not clear about that situation. Because Mr. Bhutto himself also was not a military man and Yahya Khan had boasted about the military situation, so I believe Mr. Bhutto arrived on the 11th, and he thought that the military situation in Pakistan at that time was indeed very well. He didn't know about the coup at home.

Dr. Kissinger: I think it was about December 11. Bhutto arrived in New York on Friday the 10th our time, 11th your time. I met Huang Hua on the 10th. I first met Huang Hua the evening of Friday the 10th, then I met Huang Hua the morning of the 11th -- no, I met Huang Hua the evening of the 10th and then I met....and then you sent us a message which we received. You called us the morning of the 12th, and we were going to the meeting with Pompidou so we sent General Haig.

But between the time we got the phone call and picked up the message we didn't know what it was. And since Huang Hua had taken a very tough line, not knowing the situation, I thought your message to us was that you were taking military measures. And since we were going to the Azores before we met with you we had to give instructions. If

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your message was you were taking military measures, our instructions were that if the Soviet Union moved against you we would move against the Soviet Union.

Prime Minister Chou: Why was it that your newspapers later on published the full minutes it seemed, or parts of the minutes, of meetings held by the Washington Special Actions Group?

Dr. Kissinger: This part of the decision was never in the Washington Special Actions Group because it was much too sensitive. This sort of decision had been made in a much smaller group.

Prime Minister Chou: I know about that. But why did the newspapers publish what had been discussed step by step in the Washington Special Actions Group with respect to the East Pakistan situation?

Dr. Kissinger: Well, first the Prime Minister has to understand the Washington Special Actions Group is a group which implements decisions--it does not make decisions. The reason that I had to take such a strong stand in this group was because the vast majority of our bureaucracy was pro-Indian and pro-Soviet.

Prime Minister Chou: Pro-Soviet?

Dr. Kissinger: More pro-Soviet than pro-Chinese in any event. I came under the most violent attack after I threatened to cancel the Moscow summit. That was when you [to Ch'iao] were there probably, the most violent attack. But what happened was a disloyal member of our bureaucracy gave these documents to the newspapers, and they printed them in order to destroy us, and they came very close. They will not be given a second opportunity.

Prime Minister Chou: But after reading the records that were published it seemed to me the members of that group came from quite a lot of quarters.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, they were almost unanimously against our policy.

Prime Minister Chou: Especially toward India.

Dr. Kissinger: They didn't understand our overall strategy. If they had understood we were getting ready to take on the Soviet Union then

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what happened was mild compared to what would have happened. The reason we moved our fleet into the Indian Ocean was not because of India primarily--it was as pressure on the Soviet Union if the Soviet Union did what I mentioned before.

Prime Minister Chou: And they also closely followed you down into the Indian Ocean.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, but what they had there we could have taken care of very easily.

Prime Minister Chou: What they were trying to do was to create more noise in East Bengal. They openly passed through the Tsushima Straits and then through the Malacca Straits.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, but not with a force that could have fought ours.

Prime Minister Chou: But you know they could surface in such a way their support to East Bengal.

Dr. Kissinger: Oh yes, it was used for that purpose. Actually, the Pakistani army in the east surrendered five days later, so it would have been too late for you to do anything.

Prime Minister Chou: Also, Yahya Kahn had already sent his order in preparation for such a measure on the 11th or the 12th.

Vice Foreign Minister Ch'iao: I would like to add a word. On the morning of Friday, the 10th, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. U Thant, had already informed us that East Pakistan had informed the Secretariat through their personnel in East Pakistan...

Dr. Kissinger: Oh yes, the Vice Foreign Minister is absolutely correct. Speaking very confidentially, we urged them then not to do this until we had an opportunity to talk to you, and to assess the situation, and I believe your advice was the same.

Vice Foreign Minister Ch'iao: That happened on the day that Mr. Bhutto arrived in New York, and on his arrival we told him about this news.

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He had originally prepared to meet U Thant, but we had a luncheon engagement with U Thant. So we went, but Mr. Bhutto upon going to the hotel immediately called Yahya Kahn and advised him not to do so. That happened on the day of his arrival in New York.

Prime Minister Chou: But we must say that Yahya Kahn made his efforts and contribution toward our countries, and we still mention this when we see him. But he was a general who did not know how to fight a war. He not only was useless in war, but he did things that worsened the situation. This was something we had not expected. We had expected he would not be able to improve the situation, but we didn't know he could have done things so badly. Because he had four divisions that had not been thrown into battle, but before any fighting they began to crumble. Actually, according to our knowledge, these armed forces were able to fight in battle.

Dr. Kissinger: But he scattered them around the frontier--he put too many forces into East Pakistan. They would have done him more good if he had used them in West Pakistan in an offensive. Secondly, he should have ignored the Indians and concentrated on one place, and tried to defeat them somewhere.

Prime Minister Chou: On such things Ayub Khan was more capable than Yahya Kahn.

Dr. Kissinger: Yahya Kahn was a decent man, but not very intelligent, and, it turned out, not a very good general. And we are very grateful to him on our side for having arranged our contacts. I think it was the last joy on his public career--he loved secret missions. He worked on it with great passion. When I visited him just before I came here, he was beside himself with conspiratorial maneuvers. He also gave me great advice on how to deal with the Prime Minister, all of which turned out to be wrong. (Prime Minister Chou laughs)

But I didn't mention it in order to go into details of this, or to discuss the Chinese aspect of the policy, but to explain our general strategy toward the Soviet Union.

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